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Just as you are.

Dear Friends,

This weekend we close out the magnificent Christmas Season with the Magi. I've been proclaiming this Gospel from our Patron Saint for 39 years as a priest.

The three Wise Men came from different beliefs, different cultures. They studied stars, and somehow, they were open to following a star, but didn't know what they would encounter. So they trusted. And they trusted something good would happen. They followed and when they arrived, they *recognized Mother and Child. They recognized Christ.*

While out to dinner with a brother priest, a fellow diner asked, "Are you Catholic priests?" And then they started asking questions of us...such as "Do you accept this group? How about that group? *This* is what I am. How does God look at me?"

My reply: *God loves one and all. And God loves you. You may not have yet discovered it, but God loves you. Just as you are.*

The Magi followed a star and wondered what they would discover in Christ Jesus. The Epiphany is sometimes called *The People's Christmas*. You and I have got great responsibility as His People. We are called *not* to be an exclusive club. We are ambassadors of Jesus Christ, called to be *open and trusting and inclusive*. We need to have *openness*. You and I must be as inclusive as we can possibly be.

We need to be reminded that like the Magi, we, too, are on a pilgrimage. We pray we discover the wonder of Jesus in our lives and in the lives of others.

The New Year is a great time to reflect. *Our doors must be open to all.* We must not close the door and remain a small unit of people.

We bring people in and remind them how they can build the City of God with: Openness, Inclusiveness, Trust and Wonder of Christ. We thank God for the gift of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

We pray for each other to be open in this New Year, trusting as He leads the way, and discovering the wonder of God's creation, filled with Love, Mercy and Forgiveness, Amen. God bless you and those you love.

In His Love,

Msgr. Walter C. Orlowski
Pastor and Dean
St. Matthew Church